

Ross Leffler Training School Complex, Main Building
Snyder Township
Brockway vicinity
Jefferson County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5361-A

HABS
PA,
33-BROWAY,
1A-

PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Buildings Survey
Mid-Atlantic Region, National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, DC 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROSS LEFFLER TRAINING SCHOOL COMPLEX

SCHOOL BUILDING

HABS No. PA-5361-A

HABS
PA,
32-BROWN,
1A-

Location: Snyder Township, Jefferson County, Pennsylvania, five miles northwest of the town of Brockway via S.R. 1010.

U.S.G.S. Munderf, PA Quadrangle,
Universal Transverse Mercator
Coordinates: 17.457355.677760

Present Owner: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Pennsylvania Game Commission
P. O. Box 1567
Harrisburg, PA 17105-1567

Present Occupant: Vacant - Building will be demolished in 1987. Last Owner-Occupant - Pennsylvania Game Commission. Building used as a Conservation Officer Training School.

Significance: The Ross Leffler Training School Complex - School Building was constructed in 1909-1910 by Meredith A. Marshall, a Pittsburgh attorney, and used as a hunting lodge and summer residence. In 1929 the building and 925 acres of surrounding land were purchased by the Pennsylvania Game Commission to be used as a conservation officer training school, the first of its kind in the United States. Improvements were made to the building and in 1932 it was dedicated and served as a part-time in-service training facility for Pennsylvania Game Commission personnel. In 1936 the school building became a full-time training facility with the induction of 36 conservation officer candidates on July 7, 1936, 27 of which successfully completed the course and graduated on March 15, 1937. The building served as a full-time training facility until February 8, 1986 when 25 conservation officers graduated. A total of 427 conservation officers were graduated from the complex.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of Erection: 1909-1910. The building was constructed by Meredith R. Marshall, a Pittsburgh attorney, and used as an exclusive hunting lodge and summer residence until 1929 when the building and surrounding lands were purchased by the Pennsylvania Game Commission.
2. Architect: No known architect or architectural plans existed for the structure at the time of the Pennsylvania Game Commission purchase.
3. Original and Subsequent Owners: Following is an incomplete chain of title to the land on which the structure stands. Reference is to the County Recorder of Deeds Office, Brookville, Pennsylvania.

1909 General Warranty Deed, February 19, 1909, recorded in Deed Book Volume 119, p. 617, R.T. Buzard and Nell B. Buzard, his wife; F.K. Bradshaw and Jean B. Bradshaw, his wife; E.K. Bradshaw, R.T. Buzard and Gertrude B. Sandt,
To
Meredith R. Marshall

1930 Deed, September 25, 1930, recorded in Deed Book Volume 194, p. 301, Meredith R. Marshall,
To
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

4. Builder: Meredith R. Marshall
Perryville Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
5. Suppliers: Humphrey Brick Company
Brookville, Pennsylvania
Supplier of Red Tile.
6. Original plans and construction: No original plans or drawings have been located. An early photograph documents that the structure was T-shaped with an open porch surrounding the first story. In addition, a closed porch is shown encompassing the rear or southern exposure of the building.

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7. Alterations and Additions: In 1935 plans were prepared by an unknown architect/draftsman to expand the square footage of habitable living space. The additions consisted of enclosing the open porch surrounding the first floor and extending the closed porch to encompass the entire second floor. A central heating system was installed to replace the four brick fireplaces of the original structure.

B. Historical Context:

The Ross Leffler Training School Complex - School Building was constructed in 1909-1910 by Meredith A. Marshall, a Pittsburgh attorney, and used as a hunting lodge and summer residence. In 1929 the building and 925 acres of surrounding land were purchased by the Pennsylvania Game Commission to be used as a conservation officer training school, the first of its kind in the United States. Improvements were made to the building and in 1932 it was dedicated and served as a part-time in-service training facility for Pennsylvania Game Commission personnel. In 1936 the school building became a full-time training facility with the induction of 36 conservation officer candidates on July 7, 1936, 27 of which successfully completed the course and graduated on March 15, 1937. The facility was utilized to train conservation officers in law enforcement techniques, land management activities and wildlife biology from 1932 to 1986. The school building served as a full-time training facility until February 8, 1986 when 25 conservation officers graduated. A total of 427 conservation officers were graduated from the complex.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The school is constructed in a hybrid institutional style.
2. Condition of the fabric: The exterior masonry is sound; but the roof is in poor to fair condition. The interior ceilings, walls and floors are in good condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The two-story structure has a full cellar. The building, which is rectangular in shape and measures 45'0" across and 54'6" deep, features a modified hipped roof with secondary hips. The interior features four brick fireplaces - two on each floor.
2. Foundation: Cement reinforced red clay tile in the cellar. Above grade walls are cement reinforced red clay tile with stucco finish.
3. Wall construction: Exterior walls are of reinforced red clay tile with a stucco finish.
4. Structural system; framing: Exterior walls and major partition walls of the original portion are cement reinforced red clay tile, load bearing. Floor joists are of rough-cut 2 x 12's - 16" on center. Roof rafters are 2 x 6's - 16" on center.
5. Porches: The added porches are of frame construction, 10'0" wide, and encompass the east, west and southern exposures of the original structure. The east porch was utilized as a dining room, south porch as a lounge area, and the west porch as an office area. The second floor porches were partitioned and utilized as dormitory facilities.

C. Description of Interior

1. Floor Plans:
 - a. Basement: The building has a full basement which is constructed of cement reinforced red clay tile walls with a poured concrete floor.
 - b. First Floor: Sketch plans are on page 8 of this section.
 - c. Second Floor: Sketch plans are on page 9 of this section.
2. Stairways: Two stairways are within the building, one located on the north wall of the lobby area and the other on the north wall of the porch area. The stairways are of wooden construction with wooden railings.

3. Flooring: Material is identical for both floors; 12" by 12" asphalt tile, light gray in color.
4. Wall and Ceiling Finish:
 - a. First Floor: Walls in the dining room, porch, typewriting rooms and office areas are stucco painted creme color. All other interior walls and partitions are dry-wall painted creme color. Ceilings in the dining room, porch, typewriting rooms and office areas are 2" wide, random length, varnished oak boards. All other ceilings are dry-wall construction painted creme color.
 - b. Second Floor: Outside walls are stucco painted creme color. All partition walls are dry-wall construction painted creme color. Ceiling is dry-wall construction painted creme color.
5. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and Doors: All doorways and doors are of wooden construction, 33" wide and 7'0" high. All exterior doors are painted brown on the outside and creme on the inside. All interior doors are painted creme. All trim in doorways and doors are of modern design and construction.
 - b. Windows: All interior window trim is of modern design and construction.
6. Decorative Features and Trim: At an undetermined date, a complete remodeling of the building was undertaken and all features and trim are of modern construction. Four red brick fireplaces with wooden mantles (2 on each floor) are located within this building.
7. Hardware: No original hardware exists. All hinges, knobs, locks, latches, etc., are of modern design and manufacture.

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8. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. Heating: Original heating system consisted of four red brick fireplaces, two on each floor as shown on the sketch plans. Existing system is a gas-fired boiler system that heats the entire building.
- b. Lighting: All lighting fixtures are modern 4 bulb, 18" wide by 4'0" long fluorescent units.
- c. Plumbing: All plumbing systems in the kitchen, bathroom, toilet and shower-bathrooms are of modern design and construction.

9. Original Furnishings: No original furnishings exist. All furnishings remaining at the time of abandonment were modern.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- 1. Pennsylvania Game News, April 1986 issue.
- 2. Game News Treasury, Author: Pennsylvania Game Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 1979.
- 3. Samuel Volpe, Deputy Game Protector, R.D. 1, Kearney Road, Brockway, Pennsylvania 15824, Interview.
- 4. Charles F. Haag, Museum Director, Taylor Memorial, 1115 Pershing Avenue, Brockway, Pennsylvania 15824, Interview.
- 5. Richard D. Furry, Game School Superintendent, P. O. Box 223, R.D. 1, Brockway, Pennsylvania 15824, Interview.
- 6. Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The Ross Leffler Training School Complex - School Building will be replaced by the construction of a new headquarters/training facility located at Elmerton Avenue, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The School Building did not conform to O.S.H.A. nor Bureau of Labor and Industry health and safety standards for a structure that domiciles people for an extended period of time. In addition, no occupancy permit was ever issued. Renovations to a 50 year old building to comply with present standards were determined to be too costly.

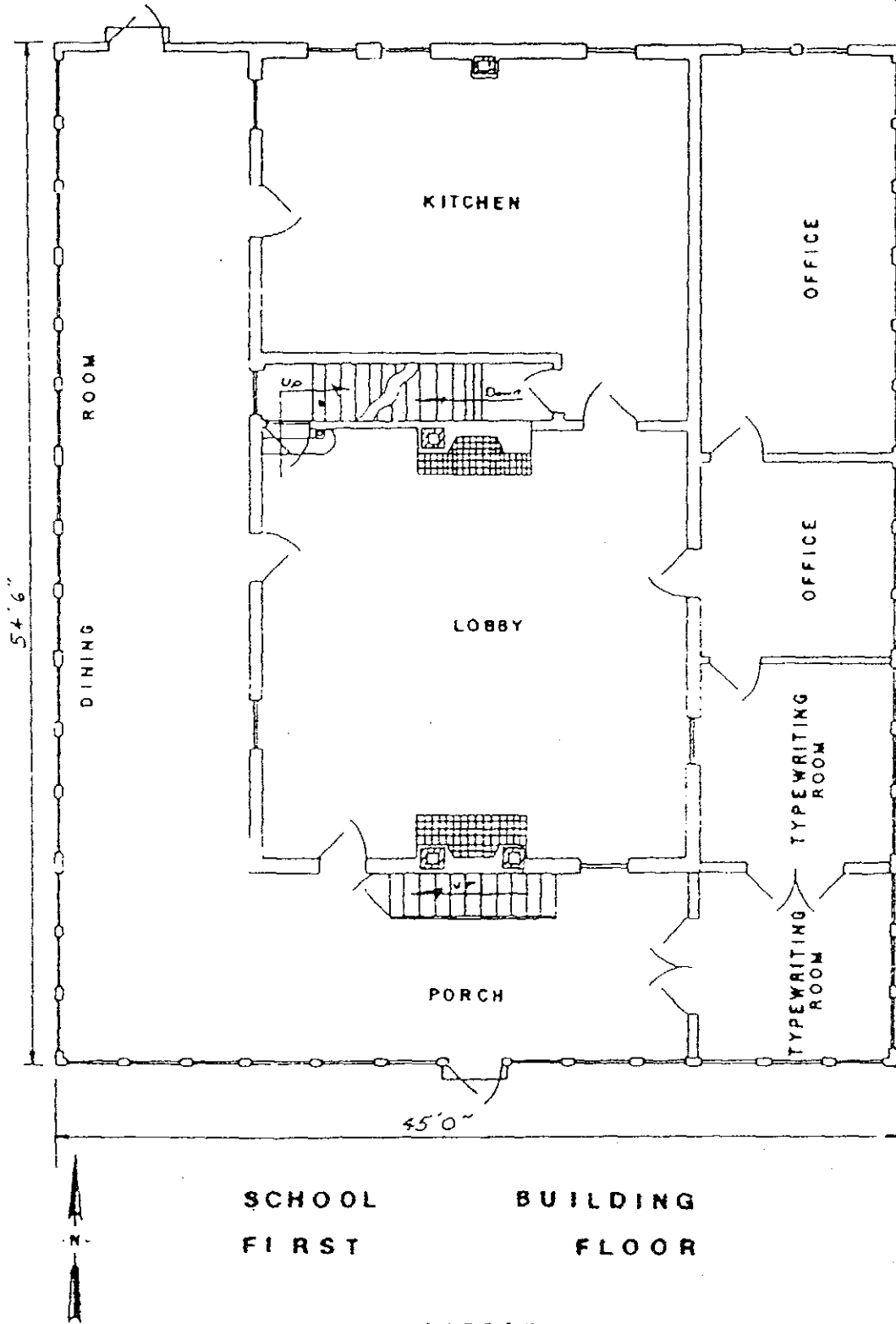
Prepared by: Roger L. Lehman

Title: Chief, Federal-State Coordination Division

Affiliation: Pennsylvania Game Commission
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Date: June 15, 1987

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